

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY: NEA:EGABINGTON

APPROVED BY: NEA:EGABINGTON

S/S:MR ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 098020

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BIERUT 3587 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 22 APR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3587

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL SWEEPSTAKES -- JUMBLATT'S POSITION

1. JUMBLATT'S DEPUTY ABBAS KHALAF AND FAWZI ABOU-DIAB INFORMED EMBOFF APRIL 21 THAT JUMBLATT CONTINUES TO DESIRE A STRONG PRESIDENT, RATHER THAN A COMPROMISE CANDIDATE. MOREOVER, BECAUSE OF THIS JUMBLATT IS BY NO MEANS SOLELY WEDDED TO RAYMOND EDDE. DESPITE SYRIAN BACKING FOR SARKIS, JUMBLATT DOES NOT EXCLUDE SUPPORTING HIM. OVER FOUR MEETINGS HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN SARKIS AND JUMBLATT'S PEOPLE INCLUDING A PRIVATE TETE-A-TETE BETWEEN SARKIS AND JUMBLATT. THESE MEETINGS BEGAN RATHER FAVORABLY, BUT
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TURNED SOMEWHAT SOUR WHEN SARKIS GAVE THE IMPRESSION TO JUMBLATT

THAT HE, SARKIS, WAS AVOIDING IMPORTANT ISSUES. BOTH KHALAF AND ABOU-DIAB INSISTED THAT SARKIS COULD STILL GET JUMBLATT'S SUPPORT IF THEY CAN AGREE ON COMMON GROUND.

2. JUMBLATT IS OF COURSE AWARE THAT, GIVEN CHRISTIAN AND SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR SARKIS, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE, IF SARKIS WERE ELECTED, TO HAVE THE STRONG MAN WITH A STRONG BACKING THAT HE DESIRES. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE MAY HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR SARKIS IS TOO STRONG TO RESIST AND THAT HE MUST FIND A GRACEFUL WAY FOR GETTING ON THE BANDWAGON.
BROWN UNQTE KISSINGER

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